



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Grand Canyon National Park

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Grand Canyon News Release

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Fire Update: Grand Canyon National Park, August 11, 2009

Grand Canyon, Ariz. -- The Aspen Fire, located on the Walhalla Plateau east of the North Rim developed area in Grand Canyon National Park, continues to be managed for resource benefits.

Fire Activity

The **Aspen Fire** is now estimated at 3,300 acres and is actively burning on its western flank along the rim of the Walhalla Plateau. On its southern flank, it is slowly backing into ponderosa pine stands that have experienced fire within the past 3 to 5 years. The fire continues to be monitored; and a contingency plan is in place to address the potential for road closures on the Walhalla Plateau over the next several days. The fire is visible from the North Rim developed area, and smoke from the fire is visible from South Rim viewpoints.

“Our goal is to protect ecological processes like fire that have shaped the park for centuries” says Chris Marks, Aspen Fire Operations Chief. “There are both benefits and impacts when allowing wildland fires to carry out their natural role in the park. Over the long term, I believe the benefits outweigh the temporary impacts of smoke and road closures”.

The natural resource benefits fire managers expect to achieve with this fire include: maintaining fire in a fire-dependent ecosystem, reducing heavy fuel loads that can increase the risk of large fires that exhibit undesirable fire behaviors and effects, recycling of nutrients and diversification of wildlife habitat.

Three additional fires are being monitored in the park at this time:

- The **Angel Fire** (9 acres) has been contained and is in monitor status.
- The **Poplar Fire** (0.1 acres) has been inactive for several days.
- The **Thompson Fire** (1 acre) has been contained and is in monitor status.

Roads and Restrictions

- Fire activity may be visible along portions of the Cape Royal Road. Visitors should not stop or pull over in these areas and are asked to use caution while driving to ensure the safety of firefighters and equipment working near the road.
- All roads and facilities in the park are open at this time.
- Backcountry restrictions may apply on the Walhalla Plateau as firefighters continue to manage the Aspen Fire. Check in at the North Rim Backcountry Office for the most current information.

Additional fire information is available from Connie Birkland at 928-638-7066 or visit the fire's Inciweb page at: <http://www.inciweb.org/incident/1782/>.

For information about the Grand Canyon National Park fire management program, please visit the park's web site at: <http://www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm>.

For backcountry information in the park, please call the backcountry office at 928-638-7875.

Additional news releases will be posted as significant changes in size, fire activity or management objectives occur.

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